

## MASTER SKYLARK.

BY JOHN BENNETT.

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### CHAPTER IV.

#### OFF FOR COVENTRY.

AT the Bridge street crossing Nick paused irresolute.

Around the public pump a chattering throng of housewives were washing out their towels, and hanging them upon the market-cross to dry. Along the stalls in Middle Row the grumbling shopmen were casting up their sales from tallies chalked upon their window-ledges, or cuffing their tardy apprentices with no light hand.

John Gibson's cart was hauling gravel from the pits in Henley street to mend the causeway at the bridge, which had been badly washed by the late spring floods, and the fine sand dribbled from the cart-tail like the sand in an hour-glass.

Here and there loutish farm hands waited for work; and at the corner two or three stout cudgel-men leaned upon their long staves, although the market was two days closed, and there was not a Coventry merchant in sight to be driven away from Stratford trade.

Goody Baker with her shovel and broom of twigs was sweeping up the market litter in the square. Nick wondered if his own mother's back would be so bent when she grew old.

"Whur be-est going, Nick?"

Roger Dawson sat astride a stick of timber in front of Master Geoffrey Thompson's new house, watching Tom Carpenter, the carver, cut fleurs-de-lis and curling traceries upon the front wall beams. He was a tenant-farmer's son, this Roger, and a likely good-for-naught.

"To Coventry," said Nick, curtly.

"Wilt take a fellow wi' thee?"

Poor company might be better than none.

"Come on."

Roger lumbered to his feet and trotted after.

"No school to-day?" he asked.

"Not for me," answered Nick, shortly, for he did not care to talk about it.

"Faither wull na have I go to school, since us ha' comed to town, an' plough-land sold for grazings," drawled Roger; "Muster Pine o' Welford saith that I ha' learned as much as faither ever knowed, an' tis enow for I. Faither saith, it maketh saucy rogues o' sons to know more than they's own dads."

Nick wondered if it did. His own father could neither read nor write, while he could do both, and had some Latin, too. At the thought of the Latin he made a wry face.

"Joe Carter be-eth in the stocks," said Roger, peering through the jeering crowd about the pillory and post; "a broke Tom Samson's pate wi' s ale-can yestreen."

But Nick pushed on. A few ruddy-faced farmers and drovers from the Red Horse Vale still lingered at the Boar Inn door and by the tap-room of the Crown; and in the middle of the street a crowd of salters, butchers, and dealers in hides, with tallow-smeared doublets and doubtful hose, were squabbling loudly about the prices set upon their wares. In the midst of them Nick saw his father, and scurried away into Back Bridge street as fast as he could, feeling very near a sneak, but far from altering his purpose.

"Job Hortop," said Simon Attwood to his apprentice at his side, looking out suddenly over the crowd, "was that my Nick yonder?"

"Nay, master, could na been," said Job, stolidly; "Nick be-eth in school by now—the clock ha' struck. 'T was Dawson's Hodge and some like ne'er-do-well."

## CHAPTER V.

## IN THE WARWICK ROAD.

THE land was full of morning sounds as the lads trudged along the Warwick road together.

An ax rang somewhere deep in the woods of Arden; cart-wheels rattled on the stony road; a blackbird whistled shrilly in the hedge, and they heard the deep-tongued belling of hounds far off in Fulbroke park.

Now and then a heron, rising from the river, trailed its long legs across the sky, or a kingfisher sparkled in his own splash. Once a lonely fisherman down by the Avon started a wild duck from the sedge, and away it went pattering upstream with frightened wings and red feet running along the water. And then a river-rat plumped into the stream beneath the willows, and left a long string of bubbles behind him.

Nick's ill-humor soon wore off as he breathed the fresh air, moist from lush meadows, and sweet from hedges pink and white with hawthorn bloom. The thought of being pent up on such a day grew more and more unbearable, and a blithe sense of freedom from all restraint blunted the prick of conscience.

"Why art going to Coventry, Nick?" inquired Roger suddenly, startled by a thought coming into his wits like a child by a bat in the room.

"To see the stage-play that the burgesses would na allow in Stratford."

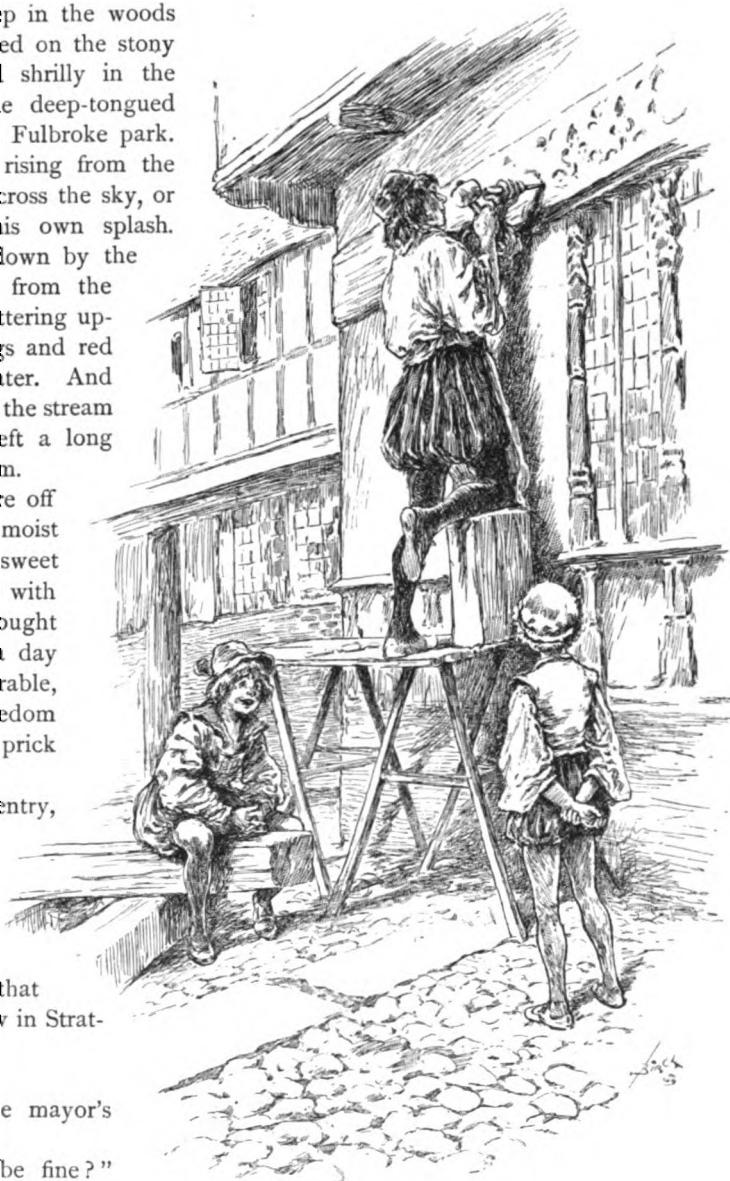
"Wull I see, too?"

"If thou hast eyes — the mayor's show is free."

"Oh, feckins, wun't it be fine?" gaped Hodge. "Be it a tailors' show, Nick, wi' Herod the king, and a rope for to hang Judas? An' wull they set the o' murdered kings, like granny saith she used world afire wi' a torch, an' make the earth to see?"

quake fearful wi' a barrel full o' stones? Or wull it be Sin in a motley gown a-thumping old-fashioned things. These be players from

the Black Man over the pate wi' a bladder full o' peasen — an' angels wi' silver wingses, an' saints wi' goolden hair? Or wull it be a giant nine yards high, clad in the beards



"WHUR BE-EST GOING, NICK?" ASKED ROGER DAWSON."

London town, and I hope they 'll play a right good English history-play, like 'The Famous Victories of Henry Fift,' to turn a fellow's legs all goose-flesh!"

Hodge stopped short in the road. "La!" said he, "I 'll go no furder if they turn me to a goose. I wunnot be turned goose, Nick Attwood—an' a plague on all witches, says I!"

"Oh, pshaw!" laughed Nick; "come on. No witch in the world could turn thee bigger goose than thou art now. Come along wi' thee; there be no witches there at all."

"Art sure thou 'rt not bedaffing me?" hesitated Hodge. "Good, then; I be na feared. Art sure there be no witches?"

"Why," said Nick, "would Master Burgess John Shakspere leave his son Will to do with witches?"

"I dunno," faltered Hodge; "a told Muster Robin Bowles it was na right to drownd 'em in the river."

Nick hesitated. "Maybe it kills the fish," said he; "and Master Will Shakspere always liked to fish. But they burn witches in London, Hodge, and he has na put a stop to it—and he 's a great man in London town."

Hodge came on a little way, shaking his head like an old sheep in a corner. "Wully Shaxper a great man?" said he. "Why, a's name be cut on the old beech-tree up Snitterfield lane, where 's uncle Henry Shaxper lives, an' 't is but poorly done. I could do better wi' my own whittle."

"Ay, Hodge," cried Nick; "and that 's about all thou canst do. Dost think that a man's greatness hangs on so little a thing as his sleight-of-hand at cutting his name on a tree?"

"Wull, maybe; maybe not; but if a be a great man, Nick Attwood, a might do a little thing passing well—so there now!"

Nick pondered for a moment. "I do na know," said he, slowly; "heaps of men can do the little things, but parlous few the big. So some one must be bigging it, or folks would all sing very small. And he doeth the big most beautiful, they say. They call him the Swan of Avon."

"Avon swans be mostly geese," said Hodge, vacantly.

"Now, look 'e here, Hodge Dawson, don't

thou be calling Master Will Shakspere goose. He married my own mother's cousin, and I will na have it."

"La, now," drawled Hodge, staring, "'t is nowt to me. Thy Muster Wully Shaxper may be all the long-necked fowls in Warrickshire for all I care. And, anyway, I 'd like to know, Nick Attwood, since when hath a been '*Muster Shaxper*'—that ne'er-do-well, play-actoring fel-low?"

"Ne'er-do-well? It is na so. When he was here last summer he was bravely dressed, and had a heap of good gold nobles in his purse. And he gave Rick Hawkins, that 's blind of an eye, a shilling for only holding his horse."

"Oh, ay," drawled Hodge; "a fool and a's money be soon parted."

"Will Shakspere is no fool," declared Nick hotly. "He 's made a peck o' money there in London town, and 's going to buy the Great House in Chapel lane, and come back here to live."

"Then a 's a witless azzy!" blurted Hodge. "If a 's so great a man amongst the lords and earlises, a 'd na come back to Stratford. An' I say a 's a witless loon—so there!"

Nick whirled around in the road. "And I say, Hodge Dawson," he exclaimed, with flashing eyes, "that 't is a shame for a lout like thee to so miscall thy thousand-time betters. And what 's more, thou shalt unsay that, or I will make thee swallow thy words right here and now!"

"I 'd loike to see thee try," Hodge began; but the words were scarcely out of his mouth when he found himself stretched on the grass, Nick Attwood bending over him.

"There! thou hast seen it tried. Now come, take that back, or I will surely box thine ears for thee."

Hodge blinked and gaped, collecting his wits, which had scattered to the four winds. "Whoy," said he, vaguely, "if 't is all o' that to thee, I take it back."

Nick rose, and Hodge scrambled clumsily to his feet. "I 'll na go wi' thee," said he, sulkily; "I will na go whur I be whupped."

Nick turned on his heel without a word, and started on.

"An' what 's more," bawled Hodge after

him, "thy Muster Wully Shaxper be-eth an old gray goose, an' boo to he, says I!"

As he spoke, he turned, dived through the thin hedge, and galloped across the field as if an army were at his heels.

Nick started back, but quickly paused. "Thou needst na run," he called; "I 've not the time to catch thee now. But mind ye this, Hodge Dawson, when I do come back, I 'll teach thee who thy betters be — Will Shakspere first of all!"

"Well crowed, well crowed, my jolly cockerel!" on a sudden called a keen, high voice beyond the hedge behind him.

Nick, startled, whirled about just in time to see a stranger leap the hedge, and come striding up the road.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE MASTER-PLAYER.

HE had trim, straight legs, this stranger, and a slender, lithe body in a tawny silken jerkin. Square-shouldered, too, was he, and over one shoulder hung a plum-colored cloak bordered with gold braid. His long hose were the color of his cloak, and his shoes were russet leather, with rosettes of plum, and such high heels as Nick had never seen before. His bonnet was of tawny velvet, with a chain twisted round it, fastened

• by a jeweled brooch through which was thrust a curly cock-feather. A fine white Holland-linen shirt peeped through his jerkin at the throat, with a broad lace collar; and his

short hair curled crisply all over his head. He had a little pointed beard, and the ends of his mustache were twisted so that they stood up fiercely on either side of his sharp nose. At his side was a long Italian poniard, in a sheath of

russet leather and silver filigree, and he had a reckless, high and mighty fling about his stride that strangely took the eye.

Nick stood, all taken by surprise, and stared.

The stranger seemed to like it, but scowled nevertheless. "What! How now?" he cried, sharply. "Dost like or like me not?"

"Why, sir," stammered Nick, utterly lost for



"HODGE FOUND HIMSELF STRETCHED ON THE GRASS, NICK ATTWOOD BENDING OVER HIM."

anything to say — "why, sir,—" and knowing nothing else to do, he took off his cap and bowed.

"Come, come," snapped the stranger, stamping his foot, "I am a swashing, ruffling, des-

perate Dick, and not to be made a common jest for Stratford dolts to giggle at. What! These legs, that have put on the very gentleman in proud Verona's streets, laid in Stratford's common stocks, like a silly apprentice's slouching heels? Nay, nay; some one should taste old Bless-his-heart here first!" and with that he clapped his hand upon the hilt of his poniard, with a wonderful swaggering tilt of his shoulders.

"Dost take me, boy?"

"Why, sir," hesitated Nick, no little awed by the stranger's wild words and imperious way, "ye surely are the master-player."

"There!" cried the stranger, whirling about, as if defying some one in the hedge. "Who said I could not act? Why, see, he took me at a touch! Say, boy," he laughed, and turned to Nick, "thou art no fool. Why, boy, I say I love thee now for this, since what hath passed in Stratford. A murrain on the town! Dost hear me, boy?—a black murrain on the town!" And all at once he made such a fierce stride toward Nick, gritting his white teeth, and clapping his hand upon his poniard, that Nick drew back afraid of him.

"But nay," hissed the stranger, and spat with scorn; "a town like that is its own murrain—let it sicken on itself!"

He struck an attitude, and waved his hand as if he were talking quite as much to the trees and sky as he was to Nick Attwood, and looked about him as if waiting for applause. Then all at once he laughed—a rollicking, merry laugh, and threw off his furious manner, as one does an old coat. "Well, boy," said he, with a quiet smile, looking kindly at Nick, "thou art a right stanch little friend to all of us stage-players. And I thank thee for it in Will Shakespeare's name; for he is the sweetest fellow of us all."

His voice was simple, frank, and free; so different from the mad tone in which he had just been ranting, that Nick caught his breath with surprise.

"Nay, lad, look not so dashed," said the master-player, merrily; "that was only old Jem Burbage's mighty tragic style; and I—I am only Gaston Carew, hail fellow well met with all true hearts. Be known to me, lad; what is thy name? I like thy open, pretty face."

Nick flushed. "Nicholas Attwood is my name, sir."

"Nicholas Attwood? Why, it is a good name. Nick Attwood,—young Nick,—I hope Old Nick will never catch thee—upon my word I do, and on the remnant of mine honour! Thou hast taken a player's part like a man; and thou art a good fellow, Nicholas Attwood, and I love thee. So thou art going to Coventry to see the players act? Surely thine is a nimble wit to follow fancy nineteen miles. Come. I am going to Coventry to join my fellows; wilt thou go with me, Nick, and dine with us this night at the best inn in all Coventry—the Blue Boar? Thou hast quite plucked up my downcast heart for me, lad, indeed thou hast; for I was sore of Stratford town—and I shall not soon forget thy plucky fending for our own sweet Will. Come, say thou wilt go with me."

"Indeed, sir," said Nick, bowing again, his head all in a whirl of excitement at this wonderful adventure—"indeed I will, and that right gladly, sir." And with heart beating like a trip-hammer, he walked along, cap in hand, not knowing that his head was bare.

The master-player laughed a simple, hearty laugh. "Why, Nick," said he, laying his hand caressingly upon the boy's shoulder, "I am no such great to-do as all that. Upon my word, I'm not! A man of some few parts, perhaps, not common in the world; but quite a plain fellow, after all. Come, put off this high humility, and be just friendly withal. Put on thy cap; we are but two good faring-fellows here."

So Nick put on his cap, and they went on together, Nick in the seventh heaven of delight.

About a mile beyond Stratford, Welcombe wood creeps down along the left. Just beyond, the Dingles wind irregularly up from the footpath below to the crest of Welcombe hill, through straggling clumps and briery hollows, sweet with nodding bluebells, ash, and hawthorn.

Nick and the master-player paused a moment at the top to catch their breath and to look back.

Stratford and the valley of the Avon lay spread before them like a picture of peace, studded with blossoming orchards and girdled

with spring. Northward the forest of Arden clad the rolling hills. Southward the fields of Feldon stretched away to the blue knolls beyond which lay Oxford and Northamptonshire. The ragged stretches of Snitterfield downs scrambled away to the left; and on the right, beyond Bearley, were the wooded uplands where Guy of Warwick and Heraud of Arden slew the wild ox and the boar. And down through the midst ran the Avon southward, like a silver ribbon slipped through Kendal green, to where the Stour comes down, past Luddington, to Bidford, and away to the misty hills.

"Why," exclaimed the master-player—"why, upon my word, it is a fair town—as fair a town as the heart of man could wish. Wish? I wish 't were sunken in the sea, with all its pack of fools! Why," said he, turning wrathfully upon Nick, "that old Sir Thingumbob of thine, down there, called me a caterpillar on the kingdom of England, a vagabond, and a common player of interludes! Called me vagabond! Me! Why, I have more good licenses than he has wits. And as to Master Bailiff Stubbes, I have permits to play from more justices of the peace than he can shake a stick at in a month of Sundays!" He shook his fist wrathfully at the distant town, and gnawed his mustache until one side pointed up and the other down. "But, hark 'e, boy, I 'll have my vengeance on them all—ay, that will I, upon my word, and on the remnant of mine honour—or else my name 's not Gaston Carew!"

"Is it true, sir," asked Nick hesitatingly, "that they despitefully handled you?"

"With their tongues, ay," said Carew bitterly; "but not otherwise." He clapped his hand upon his poniard, and threw back his head defiantly. "They dared not come to blows—they knew my kind! Yet John Shakspere is no bad sort—he knoweth what is what. But Master Bailiff Stubbes, I ween, is a long-eared thing that brays for thistles. I 'll thistle him! He called Will Shakspere rogue—hast ever looked through a red glass?"

"Nay," said Nick.

"Well, it turns the whole world red. And so it is with Master Stubbes. He looks through a pair of rogue's eyes and sees the whole world

rogue. Why, boy," cried the master-player vehemently, "he thought to buy my tongue! Marry, if tongues were troubles he has bought himself a peck! What! Buy my silence? Nay, he 'll see a deadly flash of silence when I come to my Lord the Admiral again!"

## CHAPTER VII.

"WELL SUNG, MASTER SKYLARK!"

IT was past high noon, and they had long since left Warwick castle far behind. "Nicholas," said the master-player in the middle of a stream of amazing stories of life in London town, "there is Blacklow knoll." He pointed to a little hill off to the left.

Nick stared; he knew the tale: how grim old Guy de Beauchamp had Piers Gaveston's head upon that hill for calling him the Black Hound of Arden.

"Ah!" said Carew, "times have changed since then, boy, when thou couldst have a man's head off for calling thee a name—or I would have yon Master Bailiff Stubbes's head off short behind the ears—and Sir Thomas Lucy's too!" he added, with a sudden flash of anger, gritting his teeth and clenching his hand to his poniard. "But, Nicholas, hast thou anything to eat?"

"Nothing at all, sir."

Master Carew pulled from his pouch some barley cakes and half a small Banbury cheese, yellow as gold, and with a keen, sharp savour. "T is enough for both of us," said he, as they came to a shady little wood with a clear, mossy-bottomed spring running down into a green meadow with a mild noise, murmuring among the stones. "Come along, Nicholas; we 'll eat it under the trees."

He had a small flask of wine, but Nick drank no wine, and went down to the spring instead. There was a wild bird singing in a bush there, and as he trotted down the slope it hushed its wandering tune. Nick took the sound up softly, and stood by the wet stones a little while, imitating the bird's trilling note, and laughing to hear it answer timidly, as if it took him for some great new bird without wings. Cocking its shy head, and watching him

shrewdly with its beady eye, it sat almost persuaded that it was only size which made them different, until Nick clapped his cap upon his head and strolled back, singing as he went.

It was only the thread of an old-fashioned madrigal which he had often heard his mother sing, with quaint words long since gone out of style and hardly to be understood, and between the staves a warbling, wordless refrain which he had learned out on the hills and in the fields, picked up from a bird's glad-throated morning-song.

He had always sung the plain-tunes in church without taking any particular thought about it; and he sang easily, with a clear, young voice which had a full, flute-like note in it like the high, sweet song of a thrush singing in deep woods.

Gaston Carew, the master-player, was sitting with his back against an oak, placidly munching the last of the cheese, when Nick began to sing. He started, straightening up as if some one had called him suddenly out of a sound sleep, and turning his head, listened eagerly.

Nick mocked the wild bird, called again with a mellow, warbling trill, and then struck up the quaint old madrigal with the bird's song running through it. Carew leaped to his feet, with a flash in his dark eyes. "My soul! My soul!" he exclaimed in an excited undertone. "It is not — nay, it cannot be — why, 't is — it is the boy! Upon my heart, he hath a skylark imprisoned in his throat! *Well sung, well sung, Master Skylark!*" he cried, clapping his hands in real delight, as Nick came singing up the bank. "Why, lad, I vow I thought thou wert up in the sky somewhere, with wings to thy back! Where didst thou learn that wonder-song?"

Nick colored up, quite taken aback. "I do na know, sir," said he; "mother learned me part, and the rest just came, I think, sir."

The master-player, his whole face alive and eager, now stared at Nicholas Attwood as fixedly as Nick had stared at him.

It was a hearty little English lad he saw, about eleven years of age, tall, slender, trimly built, and fair. A gray cloth cap clung to the side of his curly yellow head, and he wore a sleeveless jerkin of dark-blue serge, gray home-

spun hose, and heelless shoes of russet leather. The white sleeves of his linen shirt were open to the elbow, and his arms were lithe and brown. His eyes were frankly clear and blue, and his red mouth had a trick of smiling that went straight to a body's heart.

"Why, lad, lad," cried Carew, breathlessly, "thou hast a very fortune in thy throat!"

Nick looked up in great surprise; and at that the master-player broke off suddenly, and said no more, though such a strange light came creeping into his eyes that Nick, after meeting his fixed stare for a moment, asked uneasily if they would not better be going on.

Without a word the master-player started. Something had come into his head which seemed to more than fill his mind; for as he strode along he whistled under his breath, and laughed softly to himself. Then again he snapped his fingers, and took a dancing step or two across the road, and at last fell to talking aloud to himself, though Nick could not make out a single word he said, for it was in some foreign language.

"Nicholas," he said suddenly, as they passed the winding lane that leads away to Kenilworth—"Nicholas, dost know any other songs like that?"

"Not just like that, sir," answered Nick, not knowing what to make of his companion's strange new mood; "but I know Master Will Shakspere's 'Then nightly sings the staring owl, to-who, to-whit, to-who!' and 'The ousel-cock so black of hue, with orange-tawny bill,' and then, too, I know the throstle's song that goes with it."

"Why, to be sure—to be sure thou knowest old Nick Bottom's song, for is n't thy name Nick? Well met, both song and singer—well met, I say! Nay," he said hastily, seeing Nick about to speak; "I do not care to hear thee talk. Sing me all thy songs. I am hungry as a wolf for songs. Why, Nicholas, I must have songs! Come, lift up that honeyed throat of thine, and sing another song. Be not so backward; surely I love thee, Nick, and thou wilt sing all of thy songs for me."

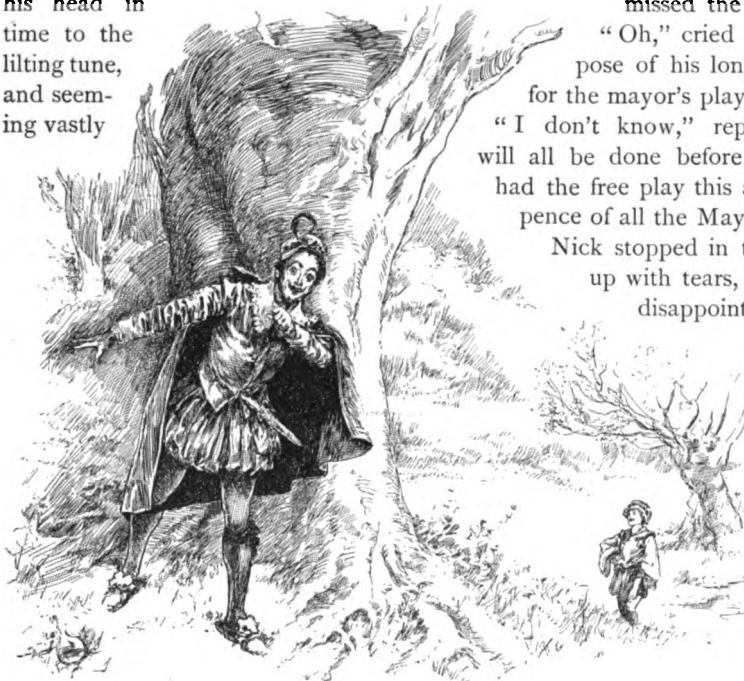
He laid his hand on Nick's shoulder in his kindly way, and kept step with him like a bosom friend, so that Nick's heart beat high with pride,



"WHAT? HOW NOW?" CRIED THE STRANGER, SHARPLY. "DOST LIKE OR LIKE ME NOT?"

and he sang all the songs he knew as they walked along.

Carew listened intently, and sometimes with a fierce eagerness that almost frightened the boy; and sometimes he frowned, and said under his breath, "Tut, tut, that will not do!"—but oftener he laughed without a sound, nodding his head in time to the lilting tune, and seeming vastly



"UPON MY HEART, HE HAS A SKYLARK PRISONED IN HIS THROAT!"  
THE MASTER-PLAYER EXCLAIMED."

pleased with Nick, the singing, and last, but not least, with himself.

And when Nick had ended, the master-player had not a word to say, but for half a mile gnawed his mustache in nervous silence, and looked Nick all over with a long and earnest look.

Then suddenly he slapped his thigh, and tossed his head back boldly. "I'll do it," he said; "I'll do it if I dance on air for it! I'll have it out of Master Stubbes and canting Stratford town, or may I never thrive! My soul! it is the very thing. His eyes are like twin holidays, and he breathes the breath of spring. Nicholas, Nicholas Skylark,—Master Skylark,—why, it is a good name, in sooth, a very good name! I'll do it—I will, upon my word, and on the remnant of mine honour!"

"Did ye speak to me, sir?" asked Nick, timidly.

"Nay, Nicholas; I was talking to the moon."

"Why, sir, the moon has not come yet," said Nick, staring into the western sky.

"To be sure," replied Master Carew, with a queer laugh. "Well, the silvery jade has missed the first act."

"Oh," cried Nick, reminded of the purpose of his long walk; "what will ye play for the mayor's play, sir?"

"I don't know," replied Carew, carelessly; "it will all be done before I come. They will have had the free play this afternoon, so as to catch the pence of all the May-day crowd to-morrow."

Nick stopped in the road, and his eyes filled up with tears, so quick and bitter was the disappointment. "Why," he cried,



with a tremble in his tired voice, "I thought the free play would be on the morrow—and now I have not a farthing to go in!"

"Tut, tut, thou silly lad!" laughed Carew, frankly; "am I thy friend for naught? What! let thee walk all the way to Coventry, and never see the play? Nay, on my

soul! Why, Nick, I love thee, lad; and I'll do for thee in the twinkling of an eye. Canst thou speak lines by heart? Well, then, say these few after me, and bear them in thy mind."

And thereupon he hastily repeated some half a dozen disconnected lines, in a high, reciting tone.

"Why, sir," cried Nick, bewildered, "it is a part!"

"To be sure," said Carew, laughing, "it is a part—and a part of a very good whole, too—a comedy by young Tom Heywood, that would make a graven image split its sides with laughing; and do thou just learn that part, good Master Skylark, and thou shalt say it in to-morrow's play."

"What, Master Carew!" gasped Nick. "I—truly? With the Lord Admiral's players?"

"Why, to be sure!" cried the master-player in great glee, clapping him upon the back.  
"Didst think I meant a parcel of dirty tinkers? Nay, lad; thou art just the very fellow for the part — my lady's page should be a pretty lad, and, soul o' me, thou art that same! And, Nick, thou shalt sing Tom Heywood's newest song — it is a pretty song; it is a lark-song like thine own."

Nick could hardly believe his ears. To act with the Lord Admiral's company! To sing with them before all Coventry! It passed the wildest dream that he had ever dreamed. What would the boys in Stratford say? Aha! they

would laugh on the other side of their mouths now!

"But will they have me, sir?" he asked doubtfully.

"Have thee?" said Master Carew, haughtily. "If I say go, thou shalt go. I am master here. And I tell thee, Nick, that thou shalt see the play, and be the play, in part, and — well, we shall see what we shall see."

With that he fell to humming and chuckling to himself, as if he had swallowed a water-mill, while Nick turned ecstatic cart-wheels along the grass beside the road, until presently Coventry came in sight.

(To be continued.)

## A NEW MOTHER GOOSE JINGLE.

